

**§ 143B-135.252. Declaration of policy and purpose.**

(a) The continued population growth and land development in North Carolina have made it necessary and desirable that areas of natural significance be identified and preserved before they are destroyed. These natural areas are irreplaceable as laboratories for scientific research, as reservoirs of natural materials for uses that may not now be known, as habitats for plant and animal species and biotic communities, as living museums where people may observe natural biotic and environmental systems and the interdependence of all forms of life, and as reminders of the vital dependence of the health of the human community on the health of the other natural communities.

(b) It is important to the people of North Carolina that they retain the opportunity to maintain contact with these natural communities and environmental systems of the earth and to benefit from the scientific, aesthetic, cultural, and spiritual values they possess. The purpose of this Part is to establish and maintain a State Registry of Natural Heritage Areas and to prescribe methods by which nature preserves may be dedicated for the benefit of present and future citizens of the State. (1985, c. 216, s. 1; 2015-241, s. 14.30(k2).)